*Unofficial Transcript by Human Rights Voices*

April 7, 2016

**Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism, Session 1**

Chairman: I now call on the Distinguished Representative of Egypt.

Egypt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Egypt considers it is very important to have an international mobilization to respond to violent extremism. That is why when the Action Plan of the Secretary-General was submitted to the General Assembly, we made a number of comments including the following.

One, the Action Plan focuses on the national and regional dimensions more than the international dimension. The Action Plan gives us a greater weight to some of the drivers within countries leading to violent extremism and then to terrorism. Let us be clear here amongst us and frank. If there is a real will to take action, then the international community must realize that there are international drivers such as the continuing occupation of Palestine as well as policies of intervention in the internal affairs of states. These are some of the main reasons for the expansion of extremism, and these cannot be ignored.

Two, the Action Plan did not include a reference to all the drivers within states leading to violent extremism and, therefore, to terrorism such as Islamophobia and actions that are insulting to Islam and to the Prophet under the pretext of freedom of expression as well as treating Muslims as second class citizens as well as other reasons. This is rejected, especially as we consider, for example, that the presence of foreign fighters from the West is a phenomenon that has been witnessed.

Three, in addition the Action Plan reflects that the current orientation in terms of the resources needed to implement projects to prevent violent extremism is to rely on resources that have been allocated to countering terrorism. This will have a negative effect on counter-terrorism activities. Therefore, it is important to look for the optimal methods to provide sufficient financing to prevent violent extremism without negatively affecting efforts to counter terrorism and to implement the UN Global Strategy Against Terrorism.

Four, the recommendations included in the Action Plan are acceptable and are in fact adopted by most countries. However, the basic problem and the lack of application at optimal application is the lack of sufficient funding. This is a question that is not dealt with in the Action Plan. We agreed in the General Assembly by virtue of the resolution adopted on the 12th of February, 2016 to welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General and take note of his Action Plan as well as to continue examining this action plan. This point of view is as well the point of view of a large number of member states. We hope this will be included in any sum up or outcome to be adopted at the end of this conference. It is important to continue consultation on this issue and to further review the UN Global Strategy to Counter Terrorism. Thank you.

I thank the Distinguished Representative of Egypt. I call now on the Representative of Pakistan.

Pakistan: Thank you, Chair. I'd like to thank Switzerland, the United Nations, and the CTITF for organizing this meeting and the panel.

Chair, Pakistan supports the preventive approach to violent extremism. Some elements of it could fit into the UN—into the larger UN prevention agenda if the UN Secretary-General’s Plan of Action had clearly outlined the actions that could have been taken at the international level, including addressing the root causes of violent extremism. I here would also like to associate myself with the statement made by the Distinguished Representative of Egypt because he’s highlighted a number of points in this regard.

Insofar as the regional and national PVE strategies are concerned, which has been the focus of SG’s Plan of Action, the UN’s role could be of support by fully respecting national sovereignty of member states. In supporting implementation of national strategies, it is important that UN agencies work according to their mandates and avoiding duplication of efforts. Most UN agencies do not have the expertise in preventing violent extremism, which is understandable, and, therefore, should not be trying to find a way of dealing with it. This fact should underpin the coordination efforts within the UN system. We all know what happens to a broth when it has too many cooks. And it’s happened in the past with the UN as well.

Chairman, we also continue to believe that a number of actions can be taken at the international level to address the international factors that contribute to violent extremism. These factors were highlighted by the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia in New York in OIC’s position presented there on the 12th of February. The OIC’s position has again been sent to the Secretary today through an agreed OIC statement, and we hope that this will find reflection in this summary of this meeting. Not today’s, but the entire meeting.

We believe that the factors outlined by the OIC need to be addressed by the relevant organs of the United Nations in accordance with their respective mandate. Here referring to the Secretary-General’s report, I would also like to express the OIC’s concern at the use of “Islamic State” for Daesh. It just gives the wrong message to the rest of the world about Islam and the Islamic world.

Thank you.

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April 7, 2016

**Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism, Session 2**

Chairman: The next speaker on the list is the Distinguished Representative of Sudan.

Sudan: Thank you, Mr. President. Allow me at the outset to thank the organizers for organizing this event, and I also wish to extend appreciation to the panelists.

The Sudan took part in all debates that led to this plan, and we also took the initiative to welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General. We have been serious in working together with all parties in the world to combat the phenomenon of violent extremism. However, we need to put forward some remarks. Some of them might have been already aired during our discussions in the last session by certain delegations. In this respect, we concur with some delegations, especially the delegation of Pakistan and the delegation of the brotherly state of Egypt.

My delegation observed that the Plan of Action focused on the national dimension to the neglect of many other international problems, problems of international relations in specific. This cannot be neglected. This cannot be disregarded. We are facing, or rather this comes in the roots of many of the international problems that we are facing nowadays, including the international occupation issue, Islamophobia, and the provocative media that is targeting Islam and the figures of Islam. That should be taken into consideration given the culture of specificities and differences across the world as well as xenophobia. The issue of xenophobia is also quite important.

The issue of finding justice or reaching justice in international relations and not to use coercive unilateral measures against states because this adds to the feeling of injustice; this adds to the deprivation that leads to poverty and unemployment and many other problems that ultimately lead to violent extremism.

Another important point that I need to raise before I conclude, we have taken due consideration of the Plan of Action’s reference to how the United Nations’ system contribute to fighting violent extremism. In this context, there was reference to peacekeeping operations and I suspect we would like to bring to your attention that these institutions—when dealing with these institutions, much care must be taken because we need to respect all mandates of the United Nations so that the United Nations wouldn’t be part of the conflict rather than part of the solution to achieving international peace and security. The reference made to conflicts, there must be a clear linkage to the contents of Chapter 8 of the United Nations Charter.

Regional institutions, regional organizations must also share the burden and undertaken their responsibilities. The African Union has demonstrated high potential in this respect over the past period. In this respect, we would also wish to welcome the initiative and to take part in this initiative, the initiative of establishing the counter violence terrorism center in the Horn of Africa.

Last point, Mr. President, the issue of human rights must be taken into due consideration in the context of combating violent extremism leading to terrorism.

Thank you very much.

*Unofficial Transcript by Human Rights Voices*

April 7, 2016

**Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism, Session 3**

CHAIRMAN: With that, I would like to immediately hand over to my first speaker on the panel to the representative of Pakistan. Ambassador, you have the floor.

PAKISTAN: Thank you, Madam Chairperson and Minister Grau. It’s an honor for me to be here. May I just tell you that the questions came rather late to me so I have a very specific statement that I thought was what was required at this panel.

Ladies and gentlemen, violent extremism has no definition. The Secretary-General accepts this in the report. But at least a shared understanding of this term is necessary if we are to have a meaningful discussion on it. To this end, a working definition of violent extremism may be violence that is threatened or perpetuated and that rises from extreme views, ideological, political, and religious.

Violent extremism is also distinct from terrorism in our understanding. It is more an immediate precursor or an accompaniment of terrorism rather than an equivalent phenomenon. Violent extremism is a global phenomenon which has many drivers and different manifestations. It neither emerges from any particular region nor is it linked to any one religion nor steered by any one set of conditions. It can occur anywhere in the world and we’ve seen it.

All UN member states unequivocally rejected attempts to associate any country, race, religion, culture, nationality with violent extremism and terrorism. And here I may also state that the OIC rejects any association of ISIL with Islam because Islamic state is nothing to do with the realities that Daesh presents, i.e., Daesh has ideologies which have nothing to do with Islam and it does give a wrong message of Islam and, therefore, we reject calling the Daesh Islamic state.

There is continuing denial of this reality unfortunately. For instance, there’s even reflected in the annotations of the themes of this meeting. They are skewed towards treating this issue exclusively as a product of domestic governance, gender, media, and education issues. They seek to circumscribe the discussion on national action plans to factors internal to countries only.

Such limitations lead to an inadequate understanding of the causes and nature of violent extremism and at worst to an ideological agenda identifying violent extremism with particular countries, region, or religion, and I think this conference should set that aside. It is very clear that violent extremism is being pushed by a complex mix of factors. Economic inequities, misgovernance, extreme ideologies, external intervention, and foreign occupation are some of the factors. No national plan of action can succeed without addressing all relevant factors of violent extremism.

For instance, in parts of Africa and the Middle East a key factor in the recent rise of violent extremism has been the incessant foreign interventions and in certain cases outright and continued foreign occupation. To ignore this and to focus only on, say, weak governance structures or gender inequality would be, if I may call it, a little illogical. Even on governance we would need to acknowledge the close linkage between the rise of extremism and deliberate destruction of governance institutions through foreign intervention and foreign occupation. The more we look at the recent history of Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, the more this linkage reinforces itself.

My own country continues to grapple with violent extremism that is geared by drivers and factors beyond our national domain as well. That notwithstanding, we have made sincere efforts to deal with intrinsic drivers of violent extremism. Almost half of our 20-point national action plan addresses its various drivers. Our Prime Minister’s Youth Program strives to provide educational opportunities, skill development, and microfinance facilities to our youth, including and specially women. Provincial governments have set up deradicalization centers that focus on counselling, vocational training, and skill development. Special education, training, and skill development programs are being devised for juvenile offenders in jails.

Serious action is being taken to address the issue of hate speech, including advisories against the use of the media to incite or justify violence or extremism. Recent legislation protecting women at workplaces and the latest rights bill seek to empower women who contribute towards addressing extremism—also contribute towards addressing extremism.

We also seek to augment our efforts through bilateral cooperation and partnership with relevant UN agencies. We would be happy to share our experiences of formulating and implementing the action plan with interested countries.

Violent extremism, Madam Chair, is increasingly afflicting developed countries as well. In recent years there’s been a disturbing rise of extreme right-wing parties driven by xenophobic Islamophobic impulses in the West. There are increasing incidents of violence against particular communities. Why is this happening?

In the developed world where ostensibly effective governance structures are in place, the rule of law apparently exists, gender equality is an accepted norm, then why do we see the rise of extreme right-wing parties in this part of the world? Why is a political discourse that creates an environment ripe for violent extremism being allowed to flourish? These are questions that we all need to answer because we are all in it together.

Madam Chairperson, the UN needs to address the phenomenon of violent extremism in its totality. The global spread of this problem and the international drivers behind it cannot be ignored for political expediency. We expect the UN to be impartial and nonselective.

So let me ask: while there appears to be a readiness, even eagerness to have the UN move into particular parts of the world, under a vague mandate of PVE would the UN be in a position to go to a country where the extremist right-wing ideologies have been given free reign and are making the atmosphere conducive to attack particular communities? And where extreme discourse is leading to success and mainstreaming of such political parties? The UN needs to think, plan, and act in a neutral manner. It must prevent itself from being perceived as it was during the Iraqi misadventure, if I may say so. If the UN does not address violent extremism in a comprehensive manner, then its credibility would be undermined. We must not allow that.

Chairperson, in order to prevent violent extremism, we need to a) have a better understanding of the concept of violent extremism; b) a recognition that it’s emanating from the developed and developing countries, all parts of the world; c) a clear identification of the drivers both international and domestic, and finding solutions to them together; d) an appreciation of the mix of measures required to counter violent extremism which are appropriate to specific national and regional situations. Without this, the inclusion of PVE and the work of every UN agency can lead to unproductive expansion of their mandates and a wastage of their resources.

We will propose the UN should focus on providing a forum for exchanging our common understanding of the phenomenon of PVE and for the exchange of national experiences and best practices in preventing violent extremism. The UN may support member states in preventing violent extremism only if requested by member states while fully respecting the sovereignty of member states. These are not new ideas. They have been stated before in New York, and they were ones that we thought were important to be stated here again today.

I thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Ambassador, for this important contribution. I now give the floor to the delegation of Sudan, please.

Sudan: I thank you, Madam Moderator, and let me start by thanking the distinguished panelists for the enriching presentations, and I fully subscribe to the approach there taken by Her Excellency, the Ambassador of Pakistan in trying to call for taking the international drivers and the national drivers together as a package and address them on an equal footing.

The General Assembly welcomed the timely initiative taken by the SG. It was a united voice that express in the resolution adopted by the General Assembly in February, but also a concern was raised that the Plan of Action needs to be further deliberated to fill gaps and also address shortcomings here and there. And I think one of the significant shortcomings, the emphasis on the national level while not tackling the international drivers on an equal footing. I think this is very important.

Not only that, but also the national drivers were tailored in a way that it gives the impression that the Plan of Action is talking about certain category of member states because the approach was just talking about lack of good governance and rule of law and human rights, and it's very telling that we are pointing finger towards a specific category of countries. And while ignoring many national drivers that are shaping a conducive environment for fueling the alarming phenomenon of violent extremism, such as the anti-tendency in many developed countries, I mean towards the Muslims and the foreigners generally.

And I can say that many political parties in developed countries, I mean the main manifesto of those political parties is based on this anti-Muslims tendency and anti-Arabs, and I think this is very, very alarming. So the Islamophobia and many, I mean, challenges I think needs to be—needed to be addressed.

The other issue, I think it's easy to identify areas of priorities for the national, I mean, plans of action. But sometimes I mean the challenges at the national level went beyond the control of the member states because the national challenges more or less symptoms of international challenges, and I think it's important to address the root causes. If you want to have a prevention of this alarming phenomenon, I think we need to tackle many international challenges.

We need to agree on having the dialogue as the main and the sole tool of promoting international relations, and not having a kind of militarization of international relations and having international intervention in internal affairs of countries in order to impose certain categories of governance or even achieve political objectives.

So we see the Plan of Action as a good opportunity, but still it needs further deliberation and we see the upcoming review cycle of the Counter-Terrorism Strategy as appropriate forum also to fill the gaps, and I think we need to have emphasis on the international drivers, not only by mentioning them but also having action-oriented recommendations because we have details when it comes to the national drivers but we are lacking this approach when it comes to the international drivers.

And this reminds me, since we are in Geneva, the seat of the Human Rights Council, the dichotomy of civil and political rights on one hand and the cultural, social, and economic rights because we see also emphasis on that category, and we have mechanisms to evaluate the violation, but when it comes to the social and cultural and economic rights, even some countries they don't recognize them.

So we need the balanced approach, and this is very important. We need the holistic approach, and we need really to depart from the stereotyping. I mean I did watch recently and Indian film entitled, *My Name is Khan: I'm Not a Terrorist*, and I think the central idea of the film was focusing on this kind of stereotyping, which is really very conducive to this alarming phenomenon. And I was expecting some colleagues from the developed countries, I mean talking about their challenges also at the national level. I mean that is also very, very alarming. We don't want to be concentrated on a certain category of countries, as if the violent extremism is also there.

And I fully subscribe to the statement of the Ambassador of Pakistan that the Islamic State has nothing to do with Islam, and it's better to refrain from having the kind of quotation, which will not be really very helpful.

I thank you, Madam Moderator.

April 8, 2016

**High-level Segment I, Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism**

SUDAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to start to assure you that I will stick to the three minutes’ limit. Also, ladies and gentlemen, I have to argue...

Allow me to express the appreciation of the Government of Sudan to the United Nations and the Swiss government for organizing and hosting this important meeting. I will tackle the issue of—and tackling the issue of the phenomenon of violent terrorism, agreeing on international, regional, national efforts to prevent and combat this phenomenon, we reaffirm our condemnation of all forms of terrorism and violent extremism including state terrorism. In this respect we would like to refer to the efforts undertaken by the Sudan in order to prevent violent extremism. We have taken numerous legislative efforts in this regard as we ratified a number of international and regional conventions, including this that have to do with the prevention and criminalization of money laundering and terrorism financing in accordance with international criteria.

We have also been active also at the regional level through organizing a number of workshops and conferences in the area of violent—countering violent terrorism and countering terrorism and violent extremism, including the efforts undertaken to support the establishment of the center for countering extremism in the Horn of Africa and East of Africa. Mr. President, we have been subject to terrorism led by rebel groups against the Sudanese state, in that intimidating citizens and threatening peace and security and stability of the Sudan.

We—it has been clear that the Sudanese government has taken up the approach of dialogue through our signing of the Road Map submitted by the High-Level African mechanism in March 2016 at Addis Ababa while the rebel movements did not do—follow suit.

We would like also to reaffirm that the Sudanese national dialogue led by His Excellency, the President of the Republic, will contribute to fostering national peace and security and reaching a political, a comprehensive political settlement.

Mr. President, the General Assembly in last February welcomed the Secretary-General's Plan of Action and referred to furthering dialogue on the phenomenon of violent extremism. Mr. President, we have to take better—to give better attention to the drivers of violent extremism at a national level and not to confine our focus to the national level.

Foreign occupation is indeed the incubator, the main incubator that breeds terrorism and violent extremism. In addition, the unilateral coercive measures is also one of the instruments that lead to threatening the security and stability of these states. The victims of these instruments are even more than the victims of violent extremism, and the continuation of these practices will lead to depravation—depriving us of our basic rights.

And thank you, Mr. President.

Chairman: Thank you, Sudan, for that statement. I would now like to give the floor to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation to His Excellency, Mr. Afshin Mehdiyev, Ambassador, Permanent Observer of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation to the European Union in Brussels. You have the floor.

ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, let me begin by offering our sincere appreciation to the United Nations Secretary-General and the Government of Switzerland for organizing this important conference. I’m confident that our deliberations today will help refine our response to preventing violent extremism at the global, regional, and national levels.

Ahead of the review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy due in June this year, the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism provides a sound basis for the rising effect of national and regional measures. We are meeting today in the wake of the tragic terrorist attacks that shook Brussels and all of us only two weeks ago, preceded by similar incidents in Lahore, Paris, Istanbul, Jakarta, Mogadishu, Dikwa, Ouagadougou, San Bernardino, and many other cities.

We’re confronted with a faceless enemy, with no face or creed, which lurks in the shadows of fear and frustration, breeds on despair and disillusionment, and is fed by foreign occupation, poverty, and extremism. Extremism generates violence, and violence turns into terrorism. It’s a manifestation of growing anger, hatred, and sense of helplessness against continuing wars, injustice, oppression, and the denial of fundamental freedom and rights, particular to those of Palestinians.

The Secretary-General’s report recognized that the security-based counter-terrorism measures have not been sufficient to prevent the spread of violent extremism. Hence, we welcome the emphasis on balanced implementation across all four pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, especially its Pillars 1 and 4 regarding targeting conditions conducive to terrorism and ensuring respect for human rights for all under rule of law.

Combative international terrorism and preventing violent extremism is another very critical area where we can succeed only through announcing cooperation among all the stakeholders. The OIC has consistently been at the forefront in the fight against extremism, radicalization, and international terrorism. Cooperation in combating terrorism is among the key objectives and principle of the OIC Charter. It was among the first to formulate a clear and principled position and adopt a Code of Conduct and International Convention on Combating International Terrorism in 1994 and 1999 respectively. The OIC Ten-Year Program of Action also provided for—for joined Islamic action and called for an international consensus in addressing this dangerous phenomenon.

At this stage, I shall refer to the key priorities, areas identified for action in the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action. I state with great satisfaction that the OIC is meaningfully engaged in all of these priority areas. Some of our concrete projects in these seven areas include activation of the OIC conflict resolution mechanism, establishment of independent permanent human rights commission, OIC messaging center to counter the extreme narrative of hate and despair, and the series of initiative for women, youth for humanitarian relief, OIC and Muslim Forum and others. We shall be happy to work with the United Nations and all other organizations to play an important role in promoting global partnership and impressive global engagement, bringing together all stakeholders for the success of our collective journey.

Let me add that the OIC member states are among the countries most affected by terrorism where Muslims are suffering from the scourge of terrorist groups and the Islamophobic policies and discourse.

OIC is not a religious organization. It’s mandated to coordinate and streamline the collective voice of the Muslim world. Its job is not to preach, but to communicate. We cannot ignore the fact that religion has been drawn to the agenda of international organizations by the extremist elements. The international community should be watchful of the potential imagination of external actors penetrating terrorists and extremist groups for the purposes of their own political agendas.

I shall conclude by offering OIC’s effective partnership to the UN and all other organizations in promoting peace and the world of hope, dignity, and justice. I thank you.

Chairman: Thank you for your statement. I shall now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Pakistan, Her Excellency Ms. Tehmina Janjua, Ambassador and Permanent Representative. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

PAKISTAN: Thank you, Richard. Mr. Chairman, as mentioned by the Secretary-General and his PV Plan of Action, violent extremism is an affront to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. We endorse this view and stress that the lack of respect for the fundamental purposes and principles of the UN Charter also leads to violent extremism. We emphasize the consensus that violent extremism cannot be associated with any country, race, religion, culture, or nationality. We deplore any attempt to do so.

Chairman, the OIC has repeatedly stressed the importance of addressing the external or international drivers of violent extremism as well as dealing with local drivers in a truly comprehensive manner.

In this regard, we need to reflect on a few questions. In today’s globalized and interconnected world, can we separate local and international context of violent extremism? Are there no international dimensions to the concepts of deprivation, injustice, exclusion, and marginalization? If poor economic development, lack of good governance and violations of human rights were the sole determinants of violent extremism, how would this phenomenon be different from other violent crimes? How could local drivers focusing on a certain region only explain the emergence of a significant number of foreign terrorist fighters coming from developed countries? Why is violent extremism growing in areas which have faced persistent foreign intervention and occupation where people have long been struggling for their legitimate right of self-determination?

How can we prevent foreign interventions that have rendered not just societies but countries and regions susceptible to violent extremism? Is it not the lack of resolution in addressing negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, intolerance lending credence to flawed narratives of extremism and terrorism? Will not the rising trends of xenophobia and Islamophobia contribute to strengthen the extremists? Will the UN be empowered to act against the growing right wing in many developed countries? Or shall the UN focus on only a few regions? We need answers to all these questions, as we discuss the PVE problem.

Chairman, an objective reply of these questions will help us identify what we have missed in our assessment of violent extremism. In our view, it is the interplay between local and international drivers that lead to violent extremism. We, therefore, strongly believe that the PVE Plan of Action needs to be based on the objective assessments and comprehensive solutions. The OIC has repeatedly stressed this in the experts meeting yesterday and its statements both in New York and Geneva.

Chairman, as regards to national measures, Pakistan started taking PVE initiatives long before the UN SG’s PVE Plan of Action, and we have done so comprehensively with particular focus on empowering youth and women. Eight of the 20 action plans of Pakistan’s National Action Plan to counter terrorism pertain to preventing violent extremism. We have planned to undertake educational reforms, prevent use of the Internet and social media, promote tolerance and reform our judicial criminal justice system to ensure—to prevent violent extremism. Pakistan will support PVE efforts in the UN that are balanced and consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. The role of the UN in these efforts is primarily upon request to serve as a forum to share best practices and on-ground experiences in preventing violent extremism; and secondly, to support measures being taken by countries strictly on request.

Before concluding, Mr. Chair, let me remind that the General Assembly Resolution 70/254 adopted by consensus on 20th February, 2016 only took note of the SG’s Plan of Action and decided to give further consideration to it. We, therefore, believe that it’s premature to discuss the implementation before the member states have given free consideration or approval to the Plan of Action.

I thank you. Ambassador Husy, I am not any more valid for the Swiss watch that was offered earlier.

Chairman: I thank the Distinguished Representative of Pakistan for her statement. I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, His Excellency Mr. Hussam Edin Aala. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

SYRIA: Thank you, Mr. President. First of all allow me to express my appreciation for the Swiss government and the UN for convening this conference. And also I’d like to express our support for the genuine endeavors to combat extremist ideologies that function as an intellectual launching pads for terrorism, which is on the increase globally, and of which the fight against—of which the fight has become the priority of the world.

Violent extremism is a multidimensional phenomenon, thus fighting and preventing it should not rest on a selective approach to its goals and root causes. That includes foreign occupation, discrimination and xenophobia.

The approach should also avoid erroneous and contrived concept. By the same token, the lack of internationally agreed definitions of terrorism and violent extremism spark a host of issues, lead to confusion and lack of distinction between the two concepts. As much as we underline the importance for nations to own plans for promotion and fight against violent terrorism, we can see that the lack of definitions, precise definitions, and leaving the issue to national laws triggers differences in international approach to these two phenomena and runs counter to the attempts to deal with them globally.

Serious and decisive countering of the threats of terrorism and extremism does not require so much the adoption of texts as it requires respect of international laws and ensuring the implementation of a cluster of international conventions and resolutions passed by the Security Council on the fight, financing, and incitement to terrorism, as well as holding to count the countries which breech these binding resolutions by supporting and inciting terrorism and spreading hate, discrimination, and intolerance in their political and media discourses and their education curricula.

The ongoing activities of networks recruiting terrorists and pushing them to fight in Syria while they get overt financial and military support is a clear case point of double standards by well-known governments, which reported adopting plans to fight terrorism and violent extremism as they adopt ideologies that fuel terror organizations and run education curricula, which incite on extremism and terrorism. Mr. President, the right approach to the fight against terrorism means shunning double standards and letting go of attempts to tapping into supporting terrorism to achieve political ends, target national regimes, and intervene in others’ affairs. These are policies which destabilized a number of countries and caused humanitarian suffering for the people as well as encouraging the spread of terrorism and spike in immigration waves.

Debates about the Secretary-General’s Report and Action Plan for Prevention of Violent Extremism shows differences in the approach and also different approaches to the causes of extremism and terrorism and ways to deal with them.

We stress on the need to take onboard all views, positions, and concerns voiced by member states and avoiding posing a unilateral view, so as we come out with an accord and efficacious effective international response to the increasing threats of terrorism and the extremist ideology that nurtures them. So that we see an end to the current selective approach to terrorism; I’m talking about good and moderate terrorism, and bad and extremist terrorism, depending on the goals it serves and the people and a place it targets. Terrorism which targets Lahore, Lebanon, Paris and others, it is the same terrorism, which is killing the lives of innocent in Damascus, Aleppo, and other Syrian cities for over five years.

Thank you.

Chairman: I thank the Distinguished Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. And I would now like to give the floor to Jordan. I would like to give the floor to Ms. Saja Majali. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Jordan: Thank you very much. And we would like to thank the Swiss government and the UN for holding this timely meeting.

Terrorism and violent extremism constitute grave threats to peace and security. Both should not be associated with any specific race, culture, nationality, religion, or region. Both are interlinked as preventing violent extremism should be seen as part of the larger efforts to effectively counter terrorism and implement our counter-terrorism strategies.

Among the drivers of violent extremism are unresolved and protected conflicts and foreign occupation. All efforts should, therefore, be focused on resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and ending occupation, which provides pretext for recruiting purposes and spreading violent extremist ideologies. Ending the crisis in Syria, which has entered its sixth year should also be a priority.

Countering violent extremism requires a comprehensive approach and constructive political, economic, and social policies that meet the aspirations of people. The Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism is, therefore, a welcomed initiative in this context. We look forward for the upcoming discussions on the Plan and view positively its recommendations. We underline, however, that implementing the recommendations requires the ample mobilization of resources.

Moreover, we emphasize the importance of national ownership, of national PVE plans. We agree with the seven priorities listed in the SG’s plans, many of which are already being incorporated in our own national efforts. Any CVE policy should focus vastly on empowering youth, who should be seen as positive agents in any efforts to counter violent extremism as Arman declaration has shown. Education in general, and rehabilitation, reintegration strategies of former extremists are important and are essential to CVE efforts, as is also the role played by religious leaders.

Another important priority in addressing violent extremism is dialogue. Jordan, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah II has launched various initiatives over the past decades. The Arman message to consolidate cohesion among Muslim sects, a common-world initiative, which calls for peace between Muslims and Christians, and a General Assembly Resolution that declares the first week of February each year as World Interfaith Harmony Week.

At the Plenary Session of the 70th GA Assembly, His Majesty suggested seven essential steps to strengthen tolerance and coexistence. These included amplifying the voice of moderation against extremist voices and recognizing the deceit in their motives by populating our media and the minds of our young with moderation and being tolerant towards intolerance.

Finally, if drivers and root causes of violent extremism and terrorism are left unchecked, they lead to devastating consequences. VE threat to one is a VE threat to all. So we must all unite our efforts to act against this threat, all for one and one for all.

Thank you very much.

Chairman: Thank you. Next speaker is Qatar, His Excellency Mr. Faisal Bin Abdullah Al-Henzab. Ambassador, you have the floor.

qatar: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Allow me at the outset to thank all the organizers of this timely conference being held amid extremely complex international conditions. Conflicts are widespread, the international community is facing the scourge of violent extremism and terrorism, the spread of the hate speech at the expense of tolerance and coexistence. This is threatening international peace and stability and also efforts to achieve sustainable development.

In this regard, we reiterate the importance of refraining from labelling extremists, terrorism, and terrorists in such a way that is prejudicial to a certain ethnic or racial group. Also, some parties are using violent extremism acts in order to fuel Islamophobia and other acts of terrorism. Attacking religious symbols would also give more excuses to extremists and their recruiters.

Mr. Chairman, the State of Qatar reiterates the importance of cooperation at the international and regional level to counter violent extremism and to integrate all levels—and efforts at all levels—namely with politicians, religious leaders, media, leaders, in such a way that is consistent with the UN Charter and international regulations and resolutions.

We reiterate the importance of the Plan of Action to prevent violent extremisms and to eradicate all the drivers, such as the continuing conflicts, occupation, marginalization, exclusion, lack of social justice, the continuing oppression of some peoples, and depriving them of their legitimate rights under dictatorships.

Facing such a challenge, Mr. Chairman, requires an international joint response and a comprehensive strategy to end conflicts in the world, namely: ending the Israeli occupation of Arab and Palestinian territories and establishing an independent and sovereign State of Palestine; reaching an urgent political solution to end the Syrian crisis and to fulfill the legitimate claims of the Syrian people, according to the Geneva meeting and the relevant resolutions.

I would like also to remind you of the initiative by the State of Qatar to hold a high-level meeting at the General Assembly about the following topic: children and youth, victims of violent extremism and how to rehabilitate and reintegrate them into society.

Mr. Chairman, based on our belief in the importance of mediation to prevent conflict and to support peaceful transformation, and to promote national reconciliation, our diplomacy in Qatar has been successful in containing many conflicts and rebuilding many post-conflict regions. We are also a founding member of the international-funded GCERF, and we are one of the major donors in this fund. The objective of our contribution is to increase our capacity to face and counter violent extremism.

We have also, at the national level, created many relevant institutions that call for coexistence, tolerance, dialogue between civilization and religions, namely the Hamad Bin Khalifa Islamic Center in Denmark, and the Doha religious dialogue center [Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue]. We have also established, within the Qatar Committee for Alliance of Civilizations, a plan for 2014-2016, and we focus on four areas of priorities: education, youth, migration, and media.

Finally, we reiterate our firm position to reject violent extremism in all its forms, regardless of the drivers or justifications, and we support all international and regional efforts to eradicate violent extremism, to end impunity, to protect human rights, and to support people’s rights to freedom, dignity, and self-determination.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Next speaker on the list is Saudi Arabia, and I would like to give the floor to His Excellency, Mr. Faisal Bin Hassan Trad. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Saudi Arabia: I would like to extend my thanks to the Government of Switzerland and to the United Nations for convening this important conference at this very time. The full version of my statement will be available on the website.

Mr. President, first of all, I would like to emphasize that we condemn all forms of violent extremism and support all international efforts and regional efforts. We have a number of fundamental, important comments that we want to make on the actions of the UN in preventing violent extremism.

We agree that extremism is not limited to any region or nationality, or to any set of beliefs. However, we note that the Plan of Action mentions only Al-Qaeda, Daesh, and Boko Haram. It does not mention other regions of the world, such as Europe, Latin America, and also it uses the term “Islamic State” which links violent extremism with the Islamic religion, and it forms an image of Islam which is not acceptable.

This does not enable other peoples, who are victims of terrorism and violence, to have protection and assistance, spreading democracy, pluralism, and human rights and women’s rights, according to the Plan of Action. It makes it possible to limit the attraction of violent extremism, but this does not take into consideration the fact that a number of youth, of women and—of men and boys and girls—have joined Daesh. That’s not taken into consideration, nor is Israeli occupation of occupied Arab territories in Palestine for decades, without any regulations. And this, in addition, there is poverty and isolation of people because of religion in Western societies.

In Saudi Arabia, we have a great deal of experience in preventing violent extremism, and we have succeeded in our efforts by participating in creating a UN center on combating terrorism with a contribution of $100 million. The King Abdullah Centre has also acted. The Arab Bureau to combat terrorism and extremism is very active. We have participated in the taskforce to combat violent extremism. We have participated in the national alliance to combat violence, the Islamic alliance to combat terrorism, and we have a number of initiatives which aim to use knowledge, and also military and sanctions.

We also have centers which provide advice and a center for rehabilitation for people involved in terrorist crimes, which use specialist methods. This initiative aims to promote the possibilities for integration of these people, and we aim to use best practices in helping with their social reintegration.

In conclusion, we reject all forms of violent extremism, and we want to emphasize that we need to face terrorist organizations on an intellectual level, in the virtual world, and through social networks, and also promulgate legislation to deal with that, based on the intellectual and physical damage done by terrorism. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Next speaker is Kuwait. I would like to give the floor to His Excellency, Mr. Jamal Al-Ghunaim. Ambassador, you have the floor.

KUWAIT: Thank you, Mr. President. Kuwait would like to express its thanks and appreciation to the Swiss government and the UN for calling for this high-profile conference.

Mr. President, Kuwait considers that this conference pinpoints the acute need of the international community to unite and take effective measures to stop the spreading of extremist violence. And we’re calling from this podium for the international community to unite and work to adopt a comprehensive approach to counter violent extremism that does not settle only to security approach, but takes regular preventative measures that deal with the causes of violent extremism. And we stress, Mr. President, that violent extremism, terrorism are a threat to all cultures, values. And it’s not limited to a given religion, race, or a culture or nationality, and that it does not recognize human rights.

Mr. President, very much like other countries around the world, Kuwait was hit by terrorism, through targeting some of its secure mosques. And from this light, Kuwait is keen to reinforce the international cooperation to stand up to the scourge of violent extremism and terrorism. And we call upon the need to develop international, regional, and national plans that are inclusive and integrated to combat violent extremism and terrorism, and also to look into the reasons behind this phenomenon, like discrimination, racism, and Islamophobia, xenophobia, occupation, and not to limit only to the fact of lack of freedoms and rights violation.

We call upon the need also to give an importance to education in order to fight the destructive ideas which incite for this violent extremism, and by promoting a culture of tolerance and respect of human rights.

Mr. President, I’d like to say that Kuwait has started a number of efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism, and has tried to stifle its sources by passing a number of regulations, laws, and decisions that are related to combating terrorism. These include: Kuwait has passed—has ratified—the 1999 Convention on the countering of financing of terrorism. Kuwait passed the Law Number 106 about money laundering. And also, we have also set up a committee to implement UN Security Council resolutions with regard to combating terrorism.

We are of the leading countries in the international coalition against Daesh, and the Deputy Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Kuwait participated in a number of international conferences, which aim to put an end to terrorism.

In conclusion, we would like to stress the importance of international cooperation, to support efforts against violent terrorism, and we look ahead to the positive outcomes from this conference and in order to further reinforce international efforts in this regard.

I thank you, Mr. President.

chairman: Thank you, Ambassador. Thank you very much. We shall now continue with the next speaker in the list, the distinguished representative of Iraq, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Mr. Mu’ayad Salih.

iraq: Mr. Chairman, allow me at the outset to express my gratitude to Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, for attending this meeting. His presence and his participation reflect the importance of this topic. I would like also to express my deepest gratitude to the Swiss government for taking this initiative and taking part in organizing this conference.

Mr. Chairman, Iraq is aware of the importance given by the international community to the issue of violent extremism, given that it is one of the drivers to the creation of rogue and outlaw groups that express their opinion through international—sorry, illegitimate means. We welcome Resolution 2178, as well as the Plan of Action of the Secretary-General to Prevent Violent Extremism.

Such steps are two necessary and essential steps in order to achieve a greater understanding of the problems that are faced by certain communities that might lead these communities or some of their members to become extremists. In this context, we think that it is essential for governments to fulfill their role in this regard, because governments are entrusted with respect in their state’s sovereignty, and they are also very close to the citizens in implementing their executive role.

Mr. Chairman, Iraq believes that one of the most important drivers behind the creation of violent groups in various societies is the feeling of injustice, unequal opportunities, unfair treatment before the law, and preventing these groups from expressing their concerns, their injustice or prejudice, especially when this is caused by some state entities. There are also other reasons that lead to injustice, such as the occupation of cities and territories by other states. This is mainly the case of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.

Mr. Chairman, criminal acts perpetrated by terrorist organizations have targeted many citizens around the world, namely Iraq. They have been a proof that we need together and join our efforts in order to fight terrorism, a phenomenon that is threatening the whole world. We need a correct diagnosis of this phenomenon, in order to find the relevant solutions to eradicate it. We need to fight the extremist ideologies of the terrorist organizations.

Mr. Chairman, the drivers of terrorism, mainly the endorsement of destructive ideologies that are crossing countries and borders, this is because these groups were not able to achieve their goals or the goals of their communities. This requires the international community to act quickly, swiftly, and jointly in order to fight the ideas and to find the solutions in order to prevent these people from becoming terrorists and murderers.

Finally, we reiterate Iraq’s determination to cooperate with the UN Strategy to Counter Terrorism, including the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, despite the fact that we have some observations that we have and that we can discuss with the relevant international entities, as well as the mechanism of implementation at the international and national levels. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I thank the Distinguished Representative of Iraq.

iran: At the present time, one of the biggest challenges to international peace and security is the emergence of violent extremist groups in different parts of the world, from Boko Haram in Africa, to ISIS in the Middle East, and many other similar groupings.

It is also inopportune that some of the xenophobia and xenophobia groups in a number of Western countries, increasingly, displaying similar violent extremist attitudes. Being predominantly consequence of the tendencies based on racial, ethnic, and religious superiority, violent extremism is inherently adverse to fundamental codes of human rights.

Those who have helped create and formed active terrorist groups in the Middle East, to serve their ulterior objectives, are among those who are responsible for the danger posed by such extremist groups to the whole of humanity.

Mr. Chairman, we have taken note with interest of the UN Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. Also the Plan of Action highlights some of the conditions conducive to violent extremism, but it has yet to address in a comprehensive and exhaustive manner the root causes of the violent extremism, without which the contemporary and emerging challenge cannot be countered.

We firmly believe that before divulging a strategy to prevent and counter violent extremism, the scope and definition of violent extremism need to be identified, with a view to come up with an action-oriented and implementable national action plan. While determining the scope and definition of violent extremism, a broad, holistic, and comprehensive approach need to be adopted.

Mr. Chairman, we are witnessing alarming increase in the incidence of religious intolerance, hate speech, xenophobia acts, racism, racial and religious profiling, violence, including sectarian violence, and terrorism in various parts of the world, which lead to or to prepare the ground for violent extremists.

It is a matter of concern that [inaudible] has also been used to advance the agenda of the violent extremism, who are using social media for spreading hate propaganda, recruiting terrorists and extremists, and engaged in financing heinous acts of terrorism. In this connection, extremist ideology and hate speech in the media against Muslims should not be condoned in the name of freedom of expression, which helps create conditions conducive for the spread of violent extremism.

Mr. Chairman, we strongly believe that a way to counter violence and violent extremism is to promote cultural peace and mutual respect. Therefore, we call upon member states to advocate for and disseminate information on tolerance and mutual understanding and respect for cultural diversity and take concrete steps for the contribution of the media and new communication technologies, including Internet, to enhancing intolerance—tolerance and mutual respect, thus strengthening the approach that must lead to rejection of the violent extremism.

Finally, Mr. Chairperson, having been a victim of terrorism and extremism, the Islamic Republic of Iran has continuously endeavored to expose the extent of the menace facing the world. The initiative of President Rouhani, in ongoing calling for a global collective find against violent extremism, called WAVE, and the subsequent consensual resolution adopted by the G8 on this initiative is among the efforts made by Iran in the field of promoting both peace and preventing violence and violent extremism.

I thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. I thank the Distinguished Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement, and I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Bahrain, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, His Excellency, Dr. Yusuf Abdulkarim Bucheeri. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

BAHRAIN: Mr. President, I'd like to thank the Swiss government and the UN for convening this very high-profile conference, and I'd like to share the previous statement. Bahrain underlined that the goals of violent extremism and fighting terrorism, protecting basic human rights, and the rule of law are goals which reinforces shahada. And we underline that violent extremism, of all expressions, should not be linked to any religion, nationality, civilization, or ethnic group, for all religions call for peace. Violent extremism is a complex complicated phenomenon which is due to number of factors, and all of these factors contributed to a certain weight, so we shouldn't settle for one factors against other, but we should just take them together and comprehensively.

Mr. President, my delegation noted with interest the UN work plan to prevent violent extremism, and as we thank the Secretary-General for fathoming out this issue and laying down the remedies, and particularly the measures you have tabled, we would like to put forward number of remarks regarding this plan.

First, it is important and in order to understand and provide a diagnosis for this information, we say that it should give a precise definition of violent extremism that is agreed upon, which does not limit it to a certain nationality, faith, or religion, but describe this phenomenon in an in-depth, comprehensive manner.

Second, discrimination, racism, and islamophobia, xenophobia, in addition to Israeli occupation of Arabic lands and Palestine for a long time are main factors, are reasons behind this phenomenon.

Third, this phenomenon is spreading to include large swathes of our region, so it's about time for international efforts to come together in a more organized way by providing funding, resources, and technical support.

Mr. President, acts of violence, violent extremism, are among the most important threats facing security and peace around the world because this represents serious violations of international human rights, particularly after the emergence of number of terror groups and also number of radical intellectual movements. Thus, we stress on naming these terrorist organizations by their names as Daesh are not to be linked to Islam and Islamic countries. Islam is so tolerant and is so different from these terror groups, which purport to own Islam while Islam is completely different from it.

Mr. President, Bahrain is well aware that the main challenge facing our contemporary society is not limited by government's commitment to the implementation of human rights regulations, but it is about these violent extremism violates this rights. Bahrain, which has seen number of acts of terror and explosions over the last years by radicalized group. Bahrain insists on implementing the law in countering violent extremism and implementing human rights values and participating in international coalition against terrorism.

Mr. President, incitement by using media, religion, and social networks, which incite hatred and is a non-peaceful menace in dealing with the different parties, all this as factors might push some people to feel that they are not equal with the other segments of society, and have pushed them to look for non-peaceful ways to express their grievances and, therefore, become violent.

In conclusion, Bahrain strategizes that to put an end to violence are relative, so we call upon the governments to deploy more efforts to put an end to the—most of the factors which lead to the emergence of this phenomenon, i.e. the phenomenon of violent extremism.

Thank you, Mr. President.

April 8, 2016

**High-level Segment II, Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism**

CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Ms. Hawa Bangura for this very important statement. I would like now to give the floor to Mr. Pierre Krähenbühl Commissioner General United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refuges in the Near East. Pierre, please?

Pierre Krähenbühl, Commissioner-General UNRWA: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. A few weeks ago, I visited the Gaza Strip, and one of UNRWA's female teachers told me of her disappointment. She had, as part of our human right curriculum, organized a competition about Martin Luther King Jr., and she told me that the event had been a failure, as none of the students had been able to come up with a dream.

Today in the Middle East and beyond, millions of young people see no hope, no prospect to contribute. That acute despair, as was mentioned in many interventions yesterday and today, will not necessarily lead young people to violence, but it impacts development and regional stability in very profound ways.

Dreams and opportunities are being destroyed by protracted conflict, prolonged occupation, injustice, humiliation, exclusion, and often bitter poverty. Youth deprived of dreams are tempting targets for recruitment efforts by radicalized or extremist groups. Preventing this from occurring, and violent extremism from spreading, requires a wide ranging response.

In the Middle East today, nothing is more important than urgently investing or reinvesting in efforts leading to a resolution of longstanding conflicts in the region. This includes the Israeli-Palestinian one. Only such political processes may lead to real and lasting stability. Skeptical attitudes towards the possibilities of achieving peace are forms of surrender. As we have seen over the past two decades, and this has been mentioned by the Secretary-General repeatedly, relying only or primarily on military responses has often failed to bring stability, and when wars are waged it is essential to remember that international humanitarian law and human rights law and the respect for civilian binds all parties to a conflict.

As for relying on humanitarian assistance alone, we all know that it never addresses the causes of conflict and violence. However effective aid delivery may be, it will never make up for the denial of dignity and rights which drive so much of the frustration we see in the Middle East.

Another critical issue is the importance of investing in education, and here UNRWA certainly makes an important contribution. The quest for dignity, recognition, employment, and identity rests on the foundations of a proper education. UNRWA runs 700 schools for 500,000 Palestine refugee boys and girls in the Middle East, cooperates with other partners, including UNESCO, on this important endeavor, and the importance of that work was recently recognized in a World Bank study entitled Learning in the Face of Adversity.

Now, we all know that education alone is not an antidote to violence, but there certainly is no way of investing in dignity and stability without education. And in all my years working in conflict zones, I have never been more impressed by the energy that young Palestinian boys and girls invest in their education. During visits to camps in Lebanon and Gaza, I met two Palestinian girls who had faced terrible violence in their lives. Young Batul lost her father and one brother fighting—fleeing the fighting in Syria, and young Ahed spent seven months in a coma after the destruction of her home during the 2014 war in Gaza. She lost her mother and two brothers.

Their tragedies unite them, but most remarkable in their stories is that both are among the highest performing students in their respective schools, and this despite the violence that has marked them so deeply. Preserving or strengthening the ability to see the good, the hope, the determination in young people and supporting them in achieving their aspirations must be one of the most effective ways of preventing violence and promoting peace.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Krähenbühl. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we would like to continue, and next speaker on the list is Egypt. I would like to ask His Excellency, Mr. Amr Ramadan to take the floor. Please, Ambassador.

Egypt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me first apologize on behalf of His Excellency, Sameh Shoukry, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, who couldn't make it to Geneva today due to another pressing engagement in Cairo.

On his behalf, I wish to commend this timely conference on preventing violent extremism, which will help elaborate on the concept increasingly in use since the General Assembly adopted its Resolution 68/127 on 18th December, 2013 without clear understanding on the notion, let alone the absence of any definition or agreed one. A term that seems to combine extreme thinking, such as radicalism and extremism with material violent acts, which actually brings it to terrorism. In that context, it would be of utmost importance to define clearly the phenomenon we wish to address globally before we embark on any measures or strategies to address it in order to ensure that the remedy is the right one.

We are familiar with the established notion of terrorism, a phenomena that the world has witnessed in the 20th century, either the Red Brigades in Italy, the Red Army in Germany, the Japanese Red Army, the Irish Republican Army, FARC in Colombia, and henceforth. Violent extremism seems to confine terrorism to fanatic Islamic ideologies which are not founded in the Islamic religion, and here, Mr. Chairman, where the problem lies when we move away from generics that know no religion, as mentioned by many speakers, to an unjustifiable focus on one aspect of extremism, even if it is across regions. We are happy to see the Secretary-General in his proposed plan addressing the impact of violent extremism on peace and security, sustainable development, enjoyment of human rights, and humanitarian action. However, we do not believe that the list of five main drivers or underlying factors he listed is comprehensive.

There are other main drivers to violent extremism or terrorism that were not identified in the Plan of Action, such as foreign domination and occupation, self-determination, racism, and xenophobia, defamation of religion, absence of prospects for the future.

In view thereof, it is extremely alarming to find that many measures adopted with the view to countering violent extremism have overwhelmingly targeted Arab and Muslim communities and individuals. We do believe that such approaches would rather fuel violent extremism rather than combat it.

We believe that it is of paramount importance that national initiatives aimed at combatting violent extremism be complemented with collective initiatives that seek to enhance efforts aimed at combatting such a phenomena and its evolving manifestations like foreign fighters, especially from western democracies; use of social media by terrorist groups; as well as various forms of support granted by some states to terrorist groups, namely political, financial, military, and logistical support. This should be done in full conformity with international law, in particular, the Charter of the United Nations.

Moreover, having a conducive economic environment that would contribute to preventing violent extremism is not the sole responsibility of governments, but rather a global community responsibility to ensure economic opportunities for all, including job creation, fair trade, and international cooperation to address poverty. In this context, and within its efforts to counter terrorism, which is complementing the prevention efforts, Egypt will convene on 11th of May during its presidency of the Security Council, a Ministerial open debate on countering the narratives and ideologies of terrorism. This debate will address all the relevant aspects, and member states are invited to participate and express their views in this regard.

The SG Plan of Action proposed drawing upon the resources allocated to combatting terrorism, which would adversely affect efforts to combat terrorists and would not assist effectively in eradicating violent extremism.

Mr. Chairman, the General Assembly, with its decision on the 12th of February this year, welcomed the initiative of the SG and took note of his Plan and requested member states to further consider it starting from the review process of the global strategy. This is an important and factual point to keep the record straight. In this regard, and due to the fact that the Plan was not adopted, and in order to have a smooth adoption of it we stress on the necessity on starting this consideration as soon as possible.

In conclusion, we are of the opinion that countering violent extremism effectively is a long process that requires identification of the phenomena, the contribution of various stakeholders nationally, regionally, and internationally. However, we believe that this process should by no means divert our attention from combatting terrorism that still represents a clear and present danger to the international community in its entirety.

I thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your statement. Thank you very much. Now we have Oman. I'll ask His Excellency, Abdulla Nasser Al Rahbi, Ambassador, Permanent Representative, to make a statement.

Oman: Thank you, Madam Co-Chair. At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General and the Swiss Foreign Minister for this initiative to hold this conference that meets an urgent need, given violent extremism and terrorism, which has become a transnational phenomenon.

We have studied the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to combat violent extremism. This effort is one that we support. It shows the consequences of extremist thinking on peace, security, and development. We emphasize the importance of Resolution 254 of 2016 and the need to take into account states' opinions. Extremism is a concept that has no precise definition, and there are disparities in positions and sometimes confusion between violent extremism and terrorism, as such.

There is a need to review the concept and provide a precise reading of it. We welcome the efforts at the national and regional as well as the international levels to address this phenomenon. We should emphasize that this phenomenon has no link with any specific religion. It is important not to stigmatize any religion or place the responsibility on a quarter of the world's population, undermining the noble principles and values of Islam through names such as Islamic State.

My country, Oman, has taken note of the danger of this phenomenon. Oman has established legislation which upholds the values of equality among citizens, the noble values. We emphasize these in our school programs, as well as cultural programs and religious discourse. We have established a plan to combat extremism with participation by academia and experts who emphasize development.

The Sultan, noting the culture of tolerance which can overcome conflicts in a peaceful way, has frequently called for the values of tolerance and coexistence to be respected. In Oman, we have prepared frameworks which encouraging people to live harmoniously. We have organized seminars with thinkers from throughout the world, and we have a traveling program named Message of Islam which seeks to bring together cultures and peoples. We have university chairs in Islamic European and American universities to strengthen dialogue among religions and prevent our society falling into the trap of violence, hatred, fanaticism, extremism, and other phenomena that would harm society. Interference in others' affairs and imposition of thinking, culture, and concept that encourage confrontation among cultures and societies, hedge money, and occupation are among the causes that provoke extremism, and there is a need to address all aspects of Islamophobia.

In conclusion, we hope that states can reach a single vision, and a true will to combat these ideas so that people may live in a climate of peace and security, and develop far from conflict.

Thank you.